

November 4, 2009

**A Message from Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH,  
Director of Public Health and Health Officer**

The demand for H1N1 vaccine in Los Angeles County continues to be high. While I am encouraged that so many residents in Los Angeles County are taking proactive measures to protect their health and the health of their loved ones, I share your concern that supplies of H1N1 vaccine have not been as plentiful as expected. You have been patient, both in standing in long lines at vaccine clinics, and in waiting for H1N1 to become more widely available, and I thank you for your patience.

If you are in one of the H1N1 priority groups and plan to visit one of Public Health's vaccine clinics, please come prepared to wait in line. If you have a private provider, please check whether they have vaccine before deciding to attend a Public Health vaccine clinic. We are trying to get all eligible individuals through the vaccine clinic as quickly as possible, but, as seen on the news, many people line up well before a vaccine clinic opens and may experience wait times that take several hours. Unfortunately, lines at vaccine clinics will most likely be outdoors. While there are staff that monitor the lines for those that have difficulty standing for long periods of time, individuals are encouraged to bring their own water, food, umbrella or hat, sunscreen, and possibly a folding chair or other item to sit on. Parents are encouraged to bring toys or games for their children. If you are sick, stay home.

Until H1N1 vaccine becomes more widely available, Public Health will continue thorough screening at its H1N1 vaccine clinics to ensure that those individuals who are at high risk for infection or for complications from the flu are able to receive the vaccine first. These priority groups for H1N1 vaccine are:

- Pregnant women,
- People who live with or care for infants under six months of age,
- Healthcare and emergency services personnel,
- Young people aged six months to 24 years of age,
- People aged 25 through 64 years of age who have health conditions that put them at higher risk for flu-related complications.

There are approximately 5.5 million people in Los Angeles County that fall into one of the H1N1 priority groups. Those who are **not** in an H1N1 priority group will have to wait for increased vaccine supply to receive vaccine. Vaccine clinics that reach capacity before posted closing hours will be forced to close early and some vaccine clinics may be cancelled altogether.

Though it is important to take steps to protect your health this flu season, I'd like to caution you against purchasing unapproved or illegal "remedies" for H1N1 online. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently issued a [statement](#)\* warning that several products represented online as the antiviral medication Tamiflu were either counterfeit or not approved for use in the United States, and could pose health risks for users. As the FDA advises, use extreme care when purchasing any medication online. Antiviral drugs should only be taken in consultation with and as prescribed by your doctor.

\* <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm186861.htm>